

# THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

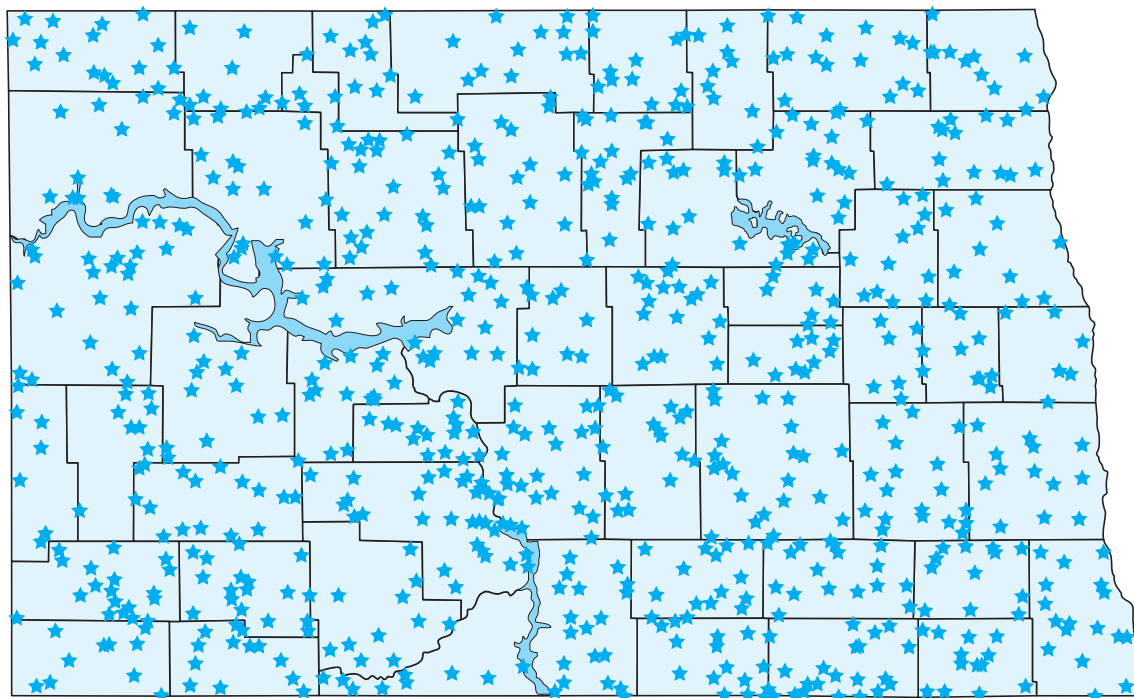
*Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management*

## Volunteer network ready for another year

By Darin Langerud

After a long winter, spring has finally arrived. That means something to everyone in North Dakota: longer days, warmer weather, spring planting, and rain instead of snow. Also, for roughly 800 volunteers statewide, it means the deployment of rain gauges used by the Atmospheric Resource Board's Cooperative Observer Network (ARBCON). This year will be the 25<sup>th</sup> year volunteers across the state have recorded and reported daily rainfall totals during the growing-season months of April through September. In addition to rainfall events, hail size and damage is also reported when it occurs.

Each spring and summer, after the gauges have taken their places on posts in fields, pastures, and back yards throughout every county, their owners each morning measure and record the rainfall received during the preceding 24-hours. Each day's report is noted on a postcard that is mailed to the ARB offices in Bismarck at the end of each month. Whenever rainfall totaling an inch or more is observed, the observers immediately telephone the National Weather Service office in Bismarck or Grand Forks, where the observations are employed by the hydrologist.



2001 Atmospheric Resource Board's COOPERATIVE OBSERVER NETWORK

In recent years, the ARBCON observers have played an important role in a number of statewide water issues. This year a unique situation exists where a major flood in the Devil's Lake basin will be occurring concurrently with a Montana drought having a potential major negative impact on Lake Sakakawea. Rainfall data collected by ARB observers may help hydrologists and engineers with planning and management of these two important issues. Currently, the Atmospheric Resource Board is collaborating with researchers at the University of Iowa on research using ARBCON data. They have identified ARBCON as one of five rainfall databases worldwide for use in this global research project; a feather in the cap of the volunteers who have collected data for these many years.

The ARBCON database is available via the Internet through a user interface on our web site. Just enter the proper information into the search engine, and our database will extract the data for you. Or, if you're more interested in rainfall patterns and totals for your area in a graphical format, you can view our archive of rainfall maps from 1977 through 2000. Finally, if you're interested in becoming a volunteer, you can e-mail us from the web site, or call our offices at (701) 328-2788. We would be happy to have you! ■

Atmospheric Resource Board  
North Dakota State Water Commission  
900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505  
701) 328-2788  
Internet: <http://www.swc.state.nd.us/ARB/>  
ND Weather Modification Association  
PO Box 2599, Bismarck, ND 58502  
701) 223-4232